From: Simmons, Denise
To: Alpert, Neal
Subject: Fw: Mass Against HP
Date: Monday, April 23, 2018 6:51:08 PM

Send this gentleman a copy of the response

From: Hubert Murray <hmurray2012@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 23, 2018 4:56 PM
To: Simmons, Denise
Subject: Re: Mass Against HP

Dear Councillor Simmons,

Further to my email of the 13th and not having heard from you, I would like to follow up to clarify some of the accusations that have been widely disseminated on this issue of HP, Israel-Palestine and the City of Cambridge.

You are no doubt overwhelmed by the quantity of emails that have come your way regarding the proposal as to whether the City of Cambridge should or should not continue to purchase HP products in view of the central role that HP technology plays in the control of the Palestinian population by the Israeli government and military authorities. This volume of correspondence and public debate is itself an indication of the importance of this issue to many in your constituency. The occupation of Palestine by Israel and the manner of the occupation is in the end one of the great moral issues of our time and one that cannot be shirked by American taxpayers, nor by their elected representatives.

I, and as I understand it, many others, have received in the mail two documents each of which paints a mendacious and scurrilous picture of the proposal to terminate the City's contract with HP. I wish to go on record to lay to rest accusations made in those documents and to clarify the intent of the forthcoming proposal.

The first document, an 8.5"x11" card printed in color on both sides, purporting to be from the Israeli-American Coalition for Action with an address in Los Angeles, California, states on the front that "Hate has no place in Cambridge" (with which I wholeheartedly agree) and on the other side asks the recipient to "Contact our (sic) City Council now and tell them to reject hate in Cambridge." While of course I agree that we should all reject hate I regard it as an impertinence for someone from the other side of the country to be referring to the Cambridge Council as "our". The card then goes on to accuse those who support the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions resolution as subscribing to a "movement [that...] is deeply rooted in anti-Semitism."

There are two legal issues here with which I am sure you are familiar. Firstly, the loaded statement, to implore council members to reject hate in Cambridge is to suggest that there is hate there to begin with, i.e. it is a false presumption, patently mischievous in intent. Secondly, it is utterly false, and one must suppose, intentionally misleading, to accuse the BDS movement itself or the entirety of its bona fide supporters of anti-Semitism. The BDS movement is a non-violent movement aimed solely at the policy of the Israeli government that uses various forms of technology, military and civilian, to hold an entire population. BDS does not address Jews either specifically or in general. It is aimed solely at the continuing policies of the Israeli government in suppressing the Arab population (Muslims, Christians and others) in Israel proper, in the West Bank and in Gaza.

This leads me to respond to one of the issues raised by the second letter, from the Jewish Community Relations Council (with no address but apparently a national organization with a local chapter in Boston) which suggests that the "Cambridge City Council, by singling out Israel, would raise questions about whether our city has been coopted by a boycott movement that is itself rife with antiSemitism." In addition to the "anti-Semitism" canard this statement raises another issue, namely "why Israel?" and not say, Syria or Dongguan where there are all sorts of human rights abuses. Of course there is a long list of countries with all sorts of nefarious stuff going on but we in the United States and in Cambridge do have unique relations with Israel which in combination amount to cooperation and collusion in the oppressive practices of the Israeli government. We have just paid our taxes for 2017: the current, 2017, US aid to Israel is $3.1 billion, a figure higher than for any other country and the only aid package that was not cut in the recent budget review. In addition, Cambridge, along with other municipalities, has been in the practice of sending police to Israel for training in "security", a significant part of which is based on the technology purveyed by HP. As Cantabrigians and as US taxpayers we do have a very special relationship with the government of Israel. It is not BDS that is singling out Israel - it is Israel, our own government, and to bring it back home, our City Council that has done the singling.

Finally, on a personal note, as the grandson of someone who made it his business to provide safe haven for Jews fleeing from oppression in the years leading up to and including the holocaust; and as the son of a lawyer who made it his personal mission to prevent and mitigate the persecution of Jews in Germany and the Baltic States in the grim years leading up to that great disaster, I do not take it kindly to be accused of anti-Semitism, nor indeed of naivety. I hold my heritage in high honor and I am proud to be associated with those, then and now, who call oppression as they see it and who support BDS as a non-violent approach to having the main protagonists re-think an unjust and bankrupt violation of basis human rights.

Yours sincerely,
Hubert Murray

On Fri, Apr 13, 2018 at 9:07 AM, Hubert Murray <hmurray2012@gmail.com> wrote:

> Dear Councilor Simmons,
> I am writing to say why I am supporting the Mass Against HP campaign in the hope that you may likewise give support. Hewlett Packard computers are as central to Israeli control over the Palestinian territories as Polaroid was in administering the Pass Laws in South Africa. A peaceful, non-violent way of putting pressure on the Israeli government is to refuse to purchase from companies that enable them to continue in the injustice and oppression visited upon the Palestinian people. As a major purchaser of HP equipment, the City of Cambridge is well placed to take its business elsewhere sending a strong and principled message to the Government of Israel that we in Cambridge do not condone the human rights violations which we see and read about on an almost daily basis.
> I have lived in Cambridge for 22 years and am very proud of our City Council for having taken bold and principled stands over the years on a number of human rights issues from South Africa to El Salvador and most recently in welcoming immigrants to the city, giving them safe haven. I am also very supportive of your own efforts to try and create affordable housing in this city for those on low incomes. I very much hope that when this issue is brought before the Council you can speak and vote according to your conscience.
> Sincerely
> Hubert Murray
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